

Herbaceous Paeonia

These perennials provide impressive flowers without a lot of fuss

Herbaceous Peonies offer some of the most spectacular flowers of any perennial genus, flowering around May with single and double forms up to 8 inches across, many with enchanting fragrance. Peonies are an undemanding crop with few pest and disease problems that can be potted in the fall for early-season sales.

De Vroomen has been growing and supplying peonies since 1970 and maintains a carefully selected range of more than 50 varieties with the most to offer in the garden. De Vroomen selects varieties for their strong stems and high bud count, enormous flower size, powerful fragrance and superior garden performance.

Superior roots

De Vroomen's herbaceous peonies are supplied as bare roots in 2-3 and 3-5 eye divisions. Grown in the sandy coastal soil of The Netherlands' famed bulb district, they benefit from conditions most conducive to formation of robust, healthy plants. Uniquely, De Vroomen's roots are grown for an additional year following division before being shipped to growers.

The resulting product is larger and free from fresh wounds.

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'Santa Fe,' a single-flower variety, has a dazzling color combination

Production tips

Peonies are hardy to USDA Zone 2 or 3 so cold is not an issue, though pot grown plants may benefit from protection from harsh wet and windy winter conditions. Peonies actually need a period of cold for best performance. Plants overwintered in tunnels should be moved outside as they start to grow to prevent stems shooting up too quickly resulting in tall straggly plants.

Peonies are early-season plants best potted in fall, giving them an opportunity to send out feeder roots and settle in before the hard winter frosts. The crown should be 1½ to 2 inches below the surface. Planting too deep can inhibit flower-



'Do Tell' is an excellent background plant in perennial beds and borders.

ing. In warmer zones with limited winter cold, plant with the top eye at or just below the surface. Peonies tolerate a wide pH range, though slightly acid to near neutral soil (pH 6.0-7.0) is the usual recommendation.

Do not allow recently planted roots to dry out, and keep soil moist through dormancy. Apply about an inch of water per week during spring growth. Once flowering is completed plants are not effected by summer drought. First year plants will benefit from being watered during their first summer.

Apply a 5-10-10, 10-10-10 or 12-12-12 fertilizer in the fall or winter.

For more: De Vroomen Holland Garden Products, (847) 395-9911; sales@devroomen.com; www.devroomen.com.

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SPECIFICS

Name: Herbaceous peony

Hardiness: USDA Zones 2-7 and 3-6.

Dimensions: 28-38 inches tall with a similar spread.

Flower color: Ranges from white through pink to deep red.

Flower form: Single to fully double. 4- to 8-inch blooms.

Landscape benefits: Spectacular in early season as specimen plants or in groups. Plants have a bushy habit and elegant foliage.